

## Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

### 2006 Request for Applications (RFA)

#### SMART GROWTH AND THE U.S. EPA

The Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED) in U.S. EPA's Office of Policy Economics and Innovation is seeking applications from communities that want to develop in ways that meet environmental and other community goals. EPA will provide technical assistance to successful applicants as described below. Eligible entities are tribal, local, regional, and state governments and nonprofit organizations that have a demonstrated partnership with a governmental entity.

Development practices that reflect the principles of smart growth support national environmental and public health goals by protecting sensitive watersheds, minimizing water quality impacts from development, reducing air emissions by increasing transportation choices, and encouraging clean-up and sustainable redevelopment of brownfields.

Smart growth is often characterized by a common set of principles:

- mix land uses;
- take advantage of compact building design;
- create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
- create walkable neighborhoods;
- foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
- preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas;
- strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
- provide a variety of transportation choices;
- make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective; and
- encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

For more information on smart growth, please visit the DCED web site at:

[www.epa.gov/smartgrowth](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth)

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITY

Communities around the country are interested in fostering economic growth, protecting their environmental resources, enhancing public health, and planning for development, but they may lack the tools, resources, or information to achieve these goals. In response to this demand, EPA is offering direct technical assistance from national experts to communities that want to incorporate smart growth techniques in their development. This assistance from EPA is intended to help communities overcome roadblocks by providing evaluation tools and expert analysis.

EPA is soliciting applications from communities that want assistance with either policy analysis (e.g., reviewing state and local codes, school siting guidelines, transportation policies, etc.) or public participatory processes (e.g., visioning, alternatives analysis, build-out analysis, etc.). Selected communities will receive assistance in the form of a multi-day visit from a team of experts organized by EPA and other national partners to work with local leaders. EPA will provide this assistance through an Agency contract vehicle, not a grant. Team members will be nationally known experts in disciplines to be determined by the community's unique needs. One example of assistance would be a team visit where the experts work with the local staff to study the community and the specific project and meet with representatives of different sectors. On the last day, the team will present preliminary findings to the community. After the visit, the team will work with the community to deliver a final report.

EPA plans to assist three to five communities in 2006. EPA anticipates announcing the selected communities in spring 2006 and working with the communities over a period of twelve months. The lessons learned from these projects will be used to help other communities with similar challenges.

## PREPARING THE APPLICATION

EPA will evaluate applications based on the criteria listed below. In addition, the project description should be very specific and clearly identify the challenge the community is facing and the specific activities that would be most helpful from the EPA-led team. When developing the project description, the applicant should assume a \$40,000 limit on the assistance to be provided. EPA provides this figure as an estimate for planning purposes; however, the actual dollar amount may be higher or lower depending on EPA's budget, project complexity, and number of projects funded.

The criteria listed below will be used to do a preliminary review of the applications. Following this initial review, EPA will conduct conference calls with finalists. These calls will be used to further evaluate the extent to which the applicant is successful in meeting the criteria. EPA will make final selections following the completion of the conference calls.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. The applicant must be (1) a tribal, state, local, or regional government; or (2) an incorporated nonprofit organization incorporated or domiciled in the United States that has a demonstrated partnership with a governmental agency. Applicants must be located in, and project activities must be conducted within, the United States, Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the U.S.
2. Technical assistance will be provided to integrate the principles of smart growth into local planning processes to promote infill development. The assistance must relate to policy analysis or public participatory processes that will improve the overall climate for brownfields redevelopment as well as revitalization of other infill sites. DCED will not consider applications

that have a principal purpose of providing training, research, and technical assistance to individuals and organizations to facilitate the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, site preparation, or community involvement associated with the clean-up, assessment, or inventory of brownfield properties. EPA funds these types of projects only under the Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment's "Brownfields Training, Research, and Technical Assistance Grants and Cooperative Agreement Program." We will consider applications for policy analysis (e.g., reviewing state and local codes, policies, school siting guidelines, etc.) and public participatory processes (e.g., neighborhood planning, community visioning, charrettes, etc.) associated with the smart growth redevelopment of infill generally in a city, county, state, or on tribal lands that includes brownfields sites as well as other types of sites. However, community-involvement activities associated with the clean-up, assessment, or inventory of individual brownfield sites are not eligible for funding under this RFA.

3. The community must have a demonstrated understanding of and commitment to the principles of smart growth. Applicants should describe actions that the community has taken to address the location and design of development, regardless of whether they have been successful. EPA is looking for communities that have already learned about the principles of smart growth and now want implementation assistance.

4. The community must clearly be facing a development-related challenge, whether it involves growth pressures, attracting more development, or planning for the future, and must have identified opportunities for changing the way it handles growth. The application should include a discussion of growth conditions in the community, as well as assets and challenges to implementing smart growth practices. The application should also specify the type of assistance (policy analysis or public participatory processes) being requested and how it will be applied.

5. The community must have a specific, clearly defined project, and there must be a clear role for a team to assist with policy analysis or public participation. Examples might include, but are not limited to: a pending update to zoning codes; creating a school facility master plan; crafting policies that allow or encourage specific smart growth techniques (e.g., transit-oriented development, infill, etc.); meeting a statutory deadline on stormwater ordinances; conducting a visioning event for redevelopment; or creating build-out analysis. Applicants must describe the project, discuss how it relates to local and regional growth, and explain how its success would affect the community's environmental, social, and economic health. EPA will work with each selected community to develop a detailed statement of work to ensure that the contract support maximizes the expert assistance available to the community.

6. The community must be able to demonstrate how it anticipates using the results from the EPA-led team to implement changes locally. The applicant should also describe the authorities that it has to implement any changes.

7. The community must form a local team to work with the EPA-led expert team and to follow up on the technical assistance. This team should include representatives from most

sectors of the community, including government, business, public interest groups, civic associations, and individual citizens. Applicants should submit letters of support and participation from the principal partners on the team, signed by an individual who can commit the organization to the project. The EPA-led team will likely be in the community for only a few days. The community itself must carry out the bulk of the work and must have the dedication and vision to succeed. Applicants must specify the staff who will work on this project before and during the team visit, and during the follow-up.

8. Elected officials – mayors, county commissioners, city council members, state commissioners, etc. – must support this project and be committed to its success. The response to this request for applications will require a letter of support from the primary elected official in the community, as well as a list of other elected officials who support it. If a state agency is applying, this letter should be from the agency head or another high-ranking manager who will have responsibility for carrying out the project.

9. Although this assistance will be free to the community, communities that can show local commitment through partnerships, such as local government staff time, support from local businesses, and other local resources, will have priority in the selection process. Applicants should include a list of local supporters and describe any previous collaborations on growth and development issues, if applicable. Applicants should also mention any other technical assistance programs or grants for which they may be applying.

## SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

To be considered complete and eligible for review, all applications must include a cover letter, summary page, project description, letter of support from the community's main elected official, and documentation of partner participation. All parts of the application must be submitted together. The following format is required:

### Cover letter (does not count against page limit)

The cover letter that accompanies your application must be signed by an official with the authority to commit your organization to the project and should be written on your organization's official letterhead.

### Summary Page (no longer than one page)

The summary page should include the project title, contact information for the project manager, type of assistance requested (policy analysis or public participation processes), and an abstract of the project. If a non-profit organization is submitting the application, then the name and contact information for the governmental partner must also be provided.

### Project description (no longer than 5 page sides)

The request for assistance must describe the project clearly and specifically. The narrative must provide a concise overview of the project, including how it ties into larger issues of local or regional growth and how EPA assistance will support the project. The description must detail

local support for action and resources (e.g., staff time, support from business, cost-sharing, etc.) that the community will bring to the project. The narrative must also address how the application meets each of the criteria and what environmental results the applicant expects. If other project partners or funding sources are involved, their role and contribution must be clearly defined. In reviewing the project description, reviewers will not consider any pages over the 5 page-side limit. Project descriptions must use no smaller than 10-point type and should have page margins all around of at least one inch.

Letter of support from elected official (not included in page limit)

Applicants must include a letter of support from the primary elected official in the community (e.g., mayor, county commission chair). If the applicant is a state government agency, the letter should be from the head of the agency or a representative who will be directing the project. Also include a list of other stakeholders who support the project; letters from these people are not required. Please include these materials with the application.

Documentation of partner participation (not included in page limit)

Applicants should include letters of support from the principal partners in the local team that will be assisting the EPA-led team and directing follow-up activities. Please include these letters with the application.

U.S. EPA must receive applications by Friday, January 6, 2006. No late applications will be accepted. Applicants must submit one original and four copies of their full application. All applications must be submitted in accordance with the requirements described above. No fax submissions will be accepted. Postmarks or meters will not be considered sufficient documentation of on-time delivery.

If you are sending your application via hand delivery (e.g., UPS, Federal Express, courier, or some other means) send it to:

Mary Kay Bailey  
Development, Community and Environment Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1301 Constitution Ave. NW  
EPA West Building, Room 1408  
Washington, DC 20004  
202-566-2859

If you are mailing your application, send it to:

Mary Kay Bailey  
Development, Community and Environment Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Mail Code 1807T  
Washington, DC 20460

Please note that there may be substantial delays in conventional mail service to EPA due to heightened security screening.

If you have questions about this solicitation, please contact:

Ilana Preuss  
[Preuss.ilana@epa.gov](mailto:Preuss.ilana@epa.gov)  
202-566-2853

or

Mary Kay Bailey  
[Bailey.marykay@epa.gov](mailto:Bailey.marykay@epa.gov)  
202-566-2859